



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Fact Sheet

County Committee Election

June 2005

Farm Service Agency

Montana State Producer Handbook



What is a FSA County Committee?

Local FSA County Committees (COC) are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of the Farm Service Agency (FSA). COC's help run FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers and ranchers who serve on COC's help decide the kind of programs their counties will have and how they will run. COC's make FSA agricultural programs fit the needs of local producers.

Responsibilities of the County Committee

County committees make decisions on:

- Commodity price support loans and payments;
- Establish allotments, yields, and marketing quotas;
- Conservation programs;
- Incentive, indemnity, and disaster payments for some commodities; and
- Disaster assistance programs.

Eligibility to Hold Office

To hold office as a county committee member, a person must meet the basic eligibility requirements listed below:

1. A person must be of legal voting age and meet either of the following conditions:
 - Be eligible to vote as an individual or member of a general partnership or joint venture in the LAA in which the person is a candidate;
 - Represent a legal entity, other than a general partnership or

joint venture, that is eligible to vote in the LAA in which the person is a candidate and meet each of the following:

- Be designated by the corporation, limited partnership, estate, trust, or other business enterprise to be its sole candidate for membership on the applicable committee;
- Be a corporation stockholder or authorized representative for an heir to an estate, a beneficiary of a trust, or an individual having an ownership interest in any entity, excluding general partnerships and joint ventures.

2. A person must reside in the LAA in which the person is a county committee candidate.

NOTE: In some cases, the county committee may waive this requirement. Check with your local county committee.

3. A person must not have been:

- Removed or disqualified from the office of county committee member, alternate, or employee;
- Removed for cause from any public office or have been convicted of fraud, larceny, embezzlement, or any other felony;
- Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services.

NOTE: The state committee or FSA Administrator, Washington, D.C., may waive the requirements in Number 3.

Who Is Eligible to Vote

Farm owners, operators, tenants, and sharecroppers of legal voting age can vote if they are eligible to take part in any FSA program. However, check with your local FSA office for voting requirements and eligibility.

Discrimination Prohibited

No person shall be denied the right to vote because of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status.

Native American Tribal Lands

Every member of a Native American tribe is considered a landowner if the land in question is tribally owned or held in trust for the tribe by the United States. Members of Native American tribes holding agricultural land are eligible to vote if they meet the age requirement.

People uncertain about their eligibility to vote in the county committee election should contact their local FSA office.

Important Dates for 2005

June 15 – COC Nomination forms available on the Montana FSA Internet site at:
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt>

August 1 – Final date nomination forms must be submitted to county FSA office.

November 4 – Final date for COC election ballots to be mailed to eligible voters. If you have not received a ballot in the mail soon after November 4, please contact your local FSA office.

December 5 – Final date for all ballots to be returned to the local FSA office.

December 12 – FSA offices will complete counting of ballots.

*During the election period, individuals not receiving a ballot in the mail may obtain a ballot directly from the county FSA office or by logging on to the Montana FSA website at:
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt>*

For Additional Information

Additional information may be obtained at local FSA offices or through the Montana FSA Web site at www.fsa.usda.gov/mt

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